

MARCH 31, 1978

JAPAN-CHINA TREATY

ANNCR: THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT, HOPEFUL OF RESUMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH PEKING ON THE CONCLUSION OF A SINO-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY, IS CONTINUING TO TRY TO BUILD UP DOMESTIC POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR SUCH A MOVE. VOA'S EDWARD CONLEY HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM TOKYO.

VOICE: JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TAKEO FUKUDA SAYS THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR CONCLUSION OF A TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. FOREIGN MINISTER SUNAO SONODA SAYS HE IS READY TO GO TO PEKING TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS ON SUCH A TREATY. THOSE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN STALLED FOR ALMOST THREE YEARS MAINLY BECAUSE OF CHINESE INSISTENCE ON AN ANTI-HEGEMONY CLAUSE WHICH JAPAN FEARS WILL HURT ITS RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN JAPAN OPPOSED TO A SINO-JAPANESE PEACE TREATY...PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT IN THAT THEY FORM PART OF THE FRAGILE BALANCE OF FACTIONS THAT HOLDS TOGETHER MISTER FUKUDA'S RULING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. SOME ARE PRO-TAIWAN, SOME PRO-MOSCOW. AND BEFORE MOVING HEAD LONG INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHINA, THE FUKUDA GOVERNMENT IS IN THE MIDST OF AN ELABORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN TO TRY TO CONVINCE THEM THAT A PEKING-TOKYO PEACE TREATY WOULD BENEFIT JAPAN, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME NOT HARMING EITHER THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA OR THE SOVIET UNION.

FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS MISTER FUKUDA HAS BEEN MEETING PERSONALLY WITH RULING AND OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBERS, SOUNDING OUT THEIR VIEWS ON THE CHINA TREATY ISSUE. AND ON THURSDAY FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA, MEETING WITH A LARGE DELEGATION OF LDP FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPECIALISTS, STATED THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION -- THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONCLUDE

A SINO-JAPAN PEACE TREATY TO, AS HE PUT IT, STABILIZE AND PERPETUATE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

THE LDP'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS RESEARCH COUNCIL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIVISION WILL NOW DEBATE THE ISSUE THEMSELVES. BUT NO ONE EXPECTS A CLEAR CUT ANSWER FROM THE GROUPS WHICH ARE MADE UP OF BOTH PRO AND ANTI TREATY MEMBERS. THE RITUALISTIC SOUNDING OUT OF THE VIEWS OF JAPANESE POLITICIANS ON THE CHINA TREATY QUESTION IS ALMOST OVER. AND WHEN IT ENDS, MISTER FUKUDA, MOST OBSERVERS FEEL, WILL FIND HIMSELF WITH NO OVERWHELMING MANDATE BUT WITH A PURELY POLITICAL DECISION TO BE MADE. CAN HE RESUME THE PEKING NEGOTIATION. WITHOUT DAMAGING HIS GOVERNMENT? THE GENERAL FEELING IN JAPAN IS THAT HE CAN. AND MANY OBSERVERS ARE EXPECTING AN ANNOUNCEMENT SOMETIME NEXT WEEK THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA WILL BE DISPATCHED TO CHINA ON OR ABOUT APRIL TENTH TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHINESE LEADERS ON THE CONCLUSION OF A TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP.

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